

21 Sept 71

P. Wermiel, Stephen
Gravel, N.Y.C.
500 n.o. 2 Beacon Press
500 n.o. 1 New York Times

Hub firm sticks to secret papers plan

By Stephen Wermiel
Globe Staff

The Beacon Press announced yesterday that it would go ahead with plans to publish the controversial Pentagon Papers, and a Pentagon spokesman, Jerry W. Friedheim, said he knew of no legal action planned against the publishing house "at this time."

The report from Arnold Tovell, editor-in-chief of Beacon Press, followed cancellation of a scheduled meeting yesterday between the publishing house and Pentagon officials.

Tovell said he believed the Pentagon wanted to discuss possible deletion of certain segments of the classified documents, but he was advised by J. Fred Buzhardt, general counsel for Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, that the meeting was canceled.

The Beacon Press has been in the middle of controversy since the announcement on Aug. 17 that it would publish the Pentagon documents on US involvement in the Vietnam war, supplied by Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska).

Last Friday, two officials of the Pentagon visited the Beacon Hill offices of the publishing house, the nonprofit publishing section of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, but according to Tovell, they did not ask to see the material held by Beacon Press.

Tovell said they described themselves as "incompetent to review the text of the documents," and advised him that Pentagon experts would contact Beacon Press.

He said he expected to hear arguments at a meeting yesterday in favor of deleting portions of the papers.

He added, "Beacon and Sen. Gravel have said all along that if significant arguments were made by the Defense Department or anyone else in behalf of deleting material we would listen to them."

He said Beacon Press had said on Friday that it would hear out the Pentagon officials.

However, according to the Washington Post, Buzhardt told Beacon Press the meeting was canceled because the publishing house had refused to show Pentagon representatives a copy of the planned publication.

The Post also reported that the Pentagon had begun a rush printing of declassified parts of the documents, which would be available for distribution possibly by the end of this week, well ahead of the Beacon Press.

The Post said the Government Printing Office

had begun preparation of the "official edition."

The Beacon Press edition, scheduled for Oct. 17, will be published in 15,000 paperback and 5000 hardcover books. The four-volume work already has cost about \$100,000.

Last night, a Pentagon spokesman denied that the Government Printing Office had begun work on a Pentagon edition. The duty officer, Lt. Col. Sherba, said, "The Pentagon is not publishing the documents."

Tovell had said earlier that he "would doubt seriously that the Pentagon is prepared to publish the report."

Beacon Press has announced that its edition includes 95 percent of the narrative in the Pentagon Papers and 25 percent of the official documents that accompanied it.

Sen. Gravel has refused to name the source of his papers, which he originally read into the record of a special midnight subcommittee meeting on June 29.